

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02997 311352Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----021656 311400Z /64

O P 311300Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8135
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2997

EXDIS, FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, -2
TAGS: PEPR UNSC PBOR LE PLO XF
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: MEETING WITH GOL PRIME MINISTER HOSS

REF: (A) STATE 135978, (B) BEIRUT 2919, (C) BEIRUT 2937

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HOSS AT HIS RESIDENCE AT 1700 MAY 30 TO ASK HIM ABOUT HIS RECENT TALKS WITH PALESTINIANS. I OPENED DISCUSSION BY ASKING HIM JUST WHAT COMMITMENTS PLO HAD MADE IN THEIR MEETING WITH HIM ON MAY 24.

2. IN RESPONSE, HOSS FIRST EMPHASIZED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO "AGREEMENT" BUT PURELY A PLO DECLARATION OF INTENTIONS FOLLOWING THAT MEETING. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD CAREFULLY VETTED THE
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PLO STATEMENT BEFORE IT WAS ISSUED, HE HAD SIGNED NOTHING. HOSS SAID PALESTINIAN STATEMENT COVERED ALL OF SOUTH LEBANON, NOT JUST THE AREA WHICH HAD BEEN OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS, HE SAID, WAS TO MAKE A FRESH START IN GOL-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS IN ORDER TO: A) MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR THE POPULATION OF SOUTH LEBANON AND B) FACILITATE THE

UNIFIL MISSION. THE PALESTINIANS HAD PROMISED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ARMED INFILTRATION OF UNIFIL AREA, NO ATTACKS ON ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON, AND NO ATTACKS ON UNIFIL UNITS. HOSS SAID THAT "ELIMINATION OF ARMED MANIFESTATIONS" MEANT THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD NO LONGER MAINTAIN ANY BARRICADES OR ROADBLOCKS, THEY WOULD NOT CONDUCT ARMED PATROLS, AND "THERE WILL BE NO ARMED MEN WALKING AROUND." IN HIS WORDS, "ARMED MEN WILL VANISH." IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE SAID THAT THE PALESTINIAN STATEMENT DID NOT REPEAT NOT COVER THE QUESTION OF UNARMED MEN ENTERING THE UNIFIL AREA NOR DID IT REQUIRE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ANY PALESTINIANS NOW LOCATED IN THE SOUTH.

4. HOSS SAID THAT DETAILED QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SIZE AND LOCATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON WERE NOW BEING WORKED OUT BY THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE WHICH IS MEETING DAILY IN SIDON. THIS COMMITTEE INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIANS, THE ADF AND THE LEBANESE ARMY. HOSS SAID THAT HE WAS IN DAILY TOUCH WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND WAS DOING WHAT HE COULD TO FACILITATE THEIR WORK.

5. HOSS SAID THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE THE COOPERATION OF A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO REGULATE THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. HE HAD CALLED IN THE IRAQI AMBASSADOR AND ASKED THAT THE 500 IRAQI VOLUNTEERS WHO WERE NOW IN THE NABATIYAH AREA BE WITHDRAWN. HE HAD ALSO BRIEFED SAUDI AMBASSADOR ALI SHAER ON HIS TALKS WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND HAD URGED HIM TO ASK HIS GOV-CONFIDENTIAL

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ERNMENT TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE PLO TO ASSURE PLO COOPERATION. HE HAD PASSED THE SAME MESSAGE TO THE SYRIANS VIA ADF COMMANDER SAMI KHATIB. I TOLD HOSS THAT USG HAD MADE DEMARCHES TO A NUMBER OF ARAB GOVERNMENTS ASKING THEM TO URGE PLO COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL, AND SUMMARIZED POINTS IN PARA 2, STATE 126253. HOSS SAID HE WAS SURE USG EFFORT HAD BEEN HELPFUL AND SAID HE WAS OPTIMISTIC PLO WOULD FULFILL ITS COMMITMENTS.

6. THE NEXT STEP, HOSS SAID, WAS TO WORK OUT A DETAILED PLAN COVERING THE REGULATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE THROUGHOUT LEBANON. FOR THIS, HE SAID, SYRIAN COOPERATION WOULD BE ESSENTIAL AND THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THEM DURING THE MEETINGS ON MAY 31 AND JUNE 1, INCLUDING POSSIBLE SYRIAN ACTION TO CONTROL PALESTINIANS BETWEEN THE ZAHRANI AND THE LITANI.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HOSS DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY SO, HE IMPLIED THAT WHAT HE IS TRYING TO WORK OUT WITH THE PLO, WITH THE SUPPORT OF KEY ARAB COUNTRIES, SUCH AS SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA, IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MODIFIED SHTAURA III AGREEMENT. THE PLO PUBLIC STATEMENT ON MAY 24 IS A HOPEFUL SIGN THAT THEY WILL COOPERATE, BUT IT IS AT MOST A DECLARATION OF INTENT AND NOT REPEAT NOT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOL. THE PLO PROBABLY MADE THIS DECLAR-

ATION BOTH TO ENCOURAGE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON SCHEDULE AND TO
ASSUAGE THE COMPLAINTS OF THEIR LEBANESE ALLIES WHO HAVE BECOME
MORE AND MORE CRITICAL OF PALESTINIAN EXCESSES IN RECENT WEEKS.
IT SEEMS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WILL BE A LONG PERIOD OF
DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE EVEN A TENTATIVE
AGREEMENT IS ARRIVED AT COVERING SUCH KEY POINTS AS HOW MANY ARMED
PALESTINIANS WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN WHERE. THE PALESTINIAN
REJECTIONISTS ARE ALREADY SAYING THAT THEY WILL NOT BE BOUND BY
ANY DECISIONS OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, PALESTINIANS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02997
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DC ALSO X1
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780227-0381
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978055/aaaaadpm.tel
Line Count: 125
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d6f6b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 135978, 78 BEIRUT 2919, 78 BEIRUT 2937
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2665492
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: MEETING WITH GOL PRIME MINISTER HOSS
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, LE, XF, UNSC, PLO, (AL-HOSS, SALIM AHMAD), (LANE, EDWARD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d6f6b39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014